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FREE

INTERVIEW LOUISE RUTKOWSKI

Hanna Barbaric chats to the former This Mortal Coil musician about her upcoming solo material

HOW DID YOU GET INTO MUSIC?

Music was always around for me from a very early age. My family home was stuffed full of it as my mum was music-mad (she sang in a dance band for a while) plus my older brother and sister were around so I was influenced by their record collection. I sang in singing competitions through the church. About my mid-teens my sister and me started mucking around with a tape recorder singing harmonies but it was really the punk movement that got me into music as a career and in particular, Blondie and the Sex Pistols. They just blew me away! My sister and me started working with a local band and we had an arrangement with them that they backed us and we sang backing vocals for them. We did some gigs in Glasgow, got reviewed by the music press, then offered record deals. By this time we'd also sung backing vocals for a band called Bourgie Bourgie, who were managed by Alan Horne, the guy who started Postcard Records, met Elliot Davis (who went on to manage Wet Wet Wet), and then got together with Ross Campbell to form a band called Sunset Gun. We signed to CBS (now Sony) shortly after that. Usual major label experience – misery – and then came 4AD – bliss.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SOUND OF YOUR MOST RECENT MATERIAL?

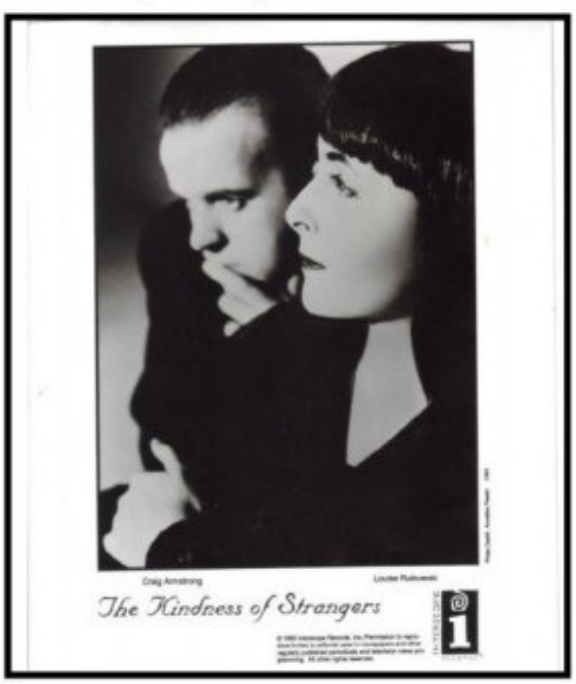
Ethereal dream pop, influenced heavily by Kate Bush, The Blue Nile and Annie Lennox. It's very film-friendly too, so I'm hoping there will some synchronisation possibilities with it in Europe.

WE KNOW YOU BEST FROM YOUR WORK WITH THIS MORTAL COIL. WHAT WOULD

YOU SAY ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORKING AS A COLLECTIVE AND MAKING SOLO MUSIC? WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

Working with This Mortal Coil was a joy from start to finish, very creative and a project where you had been chosen for your vocal qualities to fit the song (Ivo Watts-Russell was very good at that) so it was an easy thing to be part of. We didn't actually meet very many of the other musicians involved strangely enough. Ivo would send you the original songs prior to the recording sessions and then you would go in to do the vocals to a very bare backing track. When we actually heard the finished product it was a revelation!

Making my own music has had so much more pressure attached to it as I am responsible for everything, but obviously it's preferable to be putting out your own work, not the vision (albeit one of genius) of someone else. It's part of the reason it's taken me so long to do because I have to feel ready to put myself out there totally alone, not part of any collective or group, as I have been in the past. The writing is my own so I can't blame anyone else if it gets crap reviews! However, writing my own album was something I knew I had to do creatively and I'm overjoyed to be facing its release at long last.



WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A MUSICIAN? AND THE WORST?

The best part of being a musician for me is other musicians! I love them as people, how they see the world, how they interact. I just love being in rehearsal or playing live – it's the social part actually. All that in between stuff that goes on and experiencing such an amazing thing together. Makes me sound a right old hippy! I don't every take my gift for granted I have to say, so being able to express myself insuch a way, and to have amazing feedback from people, well, that's a privilege.

The worst would be the uncertainty, the dodgy finances. I do get streaks of envy when I see people I know in "normal" professions with the nice house, the money in the bank, the holidays. It can get to me sometimes but I've come to realise that that is their reward for doing jobs they don't really want to do, for not having any drive to explore talents they might have. It takes a lot of courage to be a creative person and you can miss out a lot. My reward is the feeling you get on stage, the beautiful things people can say to me about how my music has made them feel, and looking at my recordings and thinking it's something that will never be lost.

ANY ADVICE YOU'D LIKE TO GIVE TO OTHER WOMEN GETTING INTO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

Be yourself and keep your feckin' clothes on. End of.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON LOUISE, VISIT LOUISERUTKOWSKI.CO.UK.

A FEMALE POINT OF VIEW

Anna Arrowsmith (AKA Anna Span) is currently studying for her PhD in the Sussex Centre of Cultural Studies at the University of Sussex. A professional filmmaker around the turn of the millennium, Arrowsmith ran Easy on the Eye productions and specialised on making porn films for women. Ana Hine caught up with her a few months ago to discuss her concept of the 'female POV'

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THE 'FEMALE POINT OF VIEW'?

When I say the 'female point of view' I mean lots of different things. Good looking guys! I can't tell you, when I first started, how few good looking guys there were. There were some in America, but they tended to be older - in their thirties or forties - and I was younger. I was like, 'Okay, but that's not exactly the sort of person I'd be shagging.'

AREN'T STRIPPER HEELS AND FLUFFY PINK SHIT FAIRLY CENTRAL TO THE PORN AESTHETIC?

You can play with the traditional porn aesthetic, don't get me wrong. It's horny, it's kind of trashy. That's why it can look really good. That luminous light, when you go to Amsterdam and you see the sex workers in windows and they've got the illuminous light... it does make your skin look flawless and lit up and chic. There is something about chic-ness. People are always trying to make porn into erotica and make it high-end. I think that's a mistake because it is about the thinness. There's a photography theorist and she talks about the thinness giving you space in order to, if the character's too developed then that gets in the way. You need to be able to be in that body yourself. It needs to leave space for you. So people always have a go about how shit porn is, but actually a lot of the tropes are very deliberate. They work in the market. I've watched people time and time again trying to reinvent the wheel and thinking, 'Oh, okay, you have to have those physical positions. People have to make an excess of noise. Because if you don't it's just boring and doesn't work.'

IF FILM DIDN'T EXIST WOULD YOU STILL BE MAKING PORN?

Well, is that including photography? I think I would say to that that I've always been a pornographer, like my imagination has always been very sexual – even as a child. And I have no history of abuse so it's not coming from any relived experience. I was very influenced by Benny Hill and that, a lot of sexy humour on telly. And if you're talking about the top-shelves of the magazines, when I would walk into a newsagents when I was a kid and all the blokes would be looking at the top-shelves and they'd look away when you walked in I'd go, 'Ooooh, I want that garden.' So obviously historically the answer would be 'No' because as a woman there's no way I would have that power.

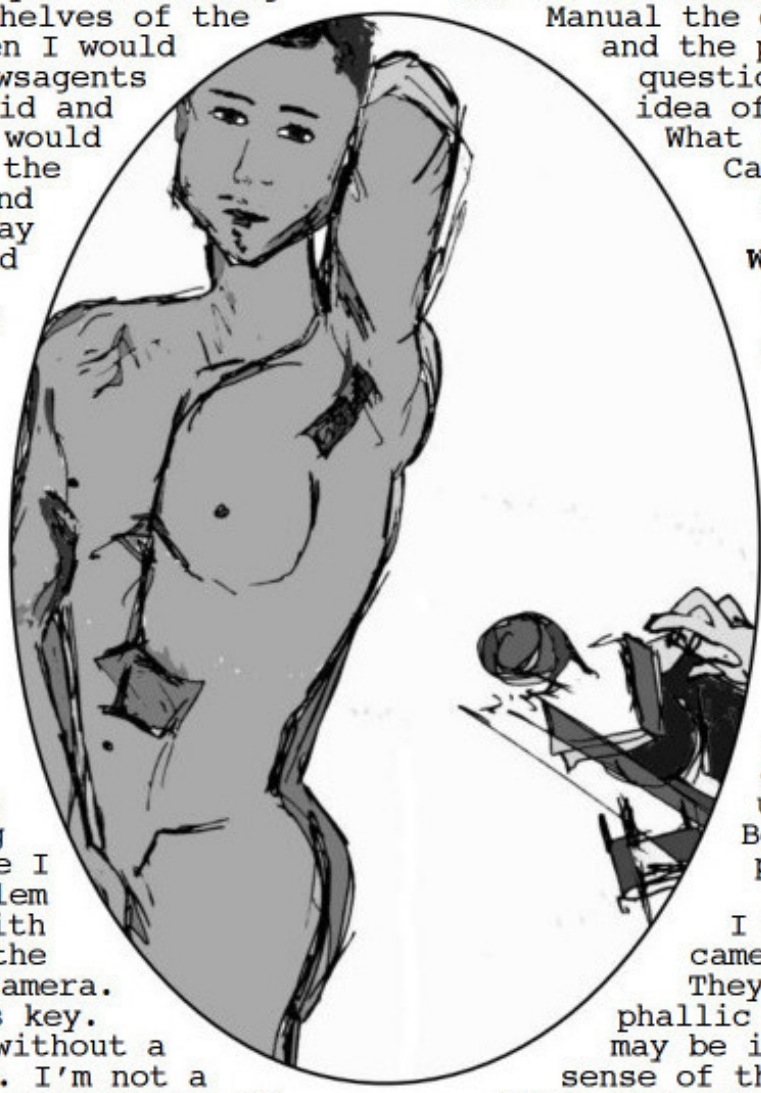
BUT IF FILM JUST DIDN'T EXIST?

I think that's an interesting question because I think the problem people have with porn is not the sex, it's the camera. I think it is key. It's not sexy without a camera, for me. I'm not a voyeur because I don't get off on people's lack of consent but I do, what is that word? Freud uses it. Getting off on looking?

SCOPOPHILA?

Yes! Scopophila. I am that. I am very much that. I have always enjoyed looking. As a kid I would constantly be told, 'Don't stare at people, don't stare at people.' Because I liked looking at people. I'm very visual.

Some people hate porn and some people like it and I think that the people who like it, I reckon, are just naturally more visual. When people talk about, people like Gail Dines, talking about, 'Oooh, let's make a new more authentic sexuality.' Thankfully I read someone blasting her theory, I think it was in the Gender Studies Manual the other day, and the person was questioning this idea of 'genuine'. What is genuine? Cameras are genuine.



WHAT IS THIS AUTHENTIC SEX THAT PEOPLE USED TO HAVE?

What? Adam and Eve? But before cameras you would have people who would pose or people who would make a big deal out of undressing. Because some people are visual. I think the camera is key. They say it's phallic and well it may be in the true sense of the Lacanian word. But actually women have the phallus or jealousy of phallus – as Beauvoir says, there's a justified penis envy – but it's not the physical thing, like Freud says, it's the power. The power that the penis brings. And that's a separate issue.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ANNA, VISIT ANNASPANDIARY.COM.

HONEY BOO BOO

Imogen Marcus interviews physical performer and writer Claudia Jeffries about her new show, Jewel.

Claudia Jeffries is currently in Edinburgh performing Jewel, a devised one-woman physical theatre show that brilliantly sends up the absurdities of high-glitz beauty pageant culture in the U.S. It follows a mother, daughter and grandmother who've made it to the final of the Five States Inter-generational Crystal Perfection Pageant and are now competing for the prize. These women inhabit a surreal world where, as Jeffries's describes it, 'clown make-up, sleeping with your eyes open and getting possessed by a giant interpretive prawn is the norm'.

Jewel is partly inspired by Toddler and Tiaras, a U.S reality TV show that follows the families of contestants in child beauty pageants. Jeffries got hooked on it after coming across a YouTube video of the six year old beauty queen Alana Thompson, aka Honey Boo Boo, before she had her own show. She realised that these child beauty pageants had so much going on - from an ethical as well as a feminist point of view. In terms of the ethics of it, Jeffries thinks that these pageants are a bad way to socialise young children.

'These shows make the little girls want it so bad, but they kind of hate it. They hate having their eyebrows plucked, being held down and spray tanned. But they deal with it, and they end up really wanting it and then they stand there and they end up staring other girls down and they're like 'she better not be prettier than me' and you can see it in their faces'.

The pageants are also very interesting from a feminist perspective. A very conscious

feminist, Jeffries is 'perturbed generally about the way that women are expected to present themselves' and sees the beauty pageant world as 'the absolute epitome of that'. After spending some time watching and researching these shows, Jeffries decided that she wanted to create a solo show about them. The result is Jewel, a darkly comic piece of theatre about the business of performing femininity.

Jeffries's devised Jewel herself and plays all three of the characters in it. Pearl, the mother character in Jewel, is directly inspired by a woman Jeffries saw on Toddler and Tiaras. 'She was well into middle age and had adopted a little girl who was now four, and she had her own geriatric mother, and they were taking part in a pageant one day together. This mother was incredible, she had like a pole dancing pole fitted in her house. She was saying 'if anyone's gonna do well, it's gonna be me'.' So the character of Pearl came almost direct from life, although Jeffries exaggerates a bit so that Pearl, like the other two characters, becomes a kind of absurd grotesque.

Jeffries has always been into absurdist, silly comedy, and cites Vic and Bob's Shooting Stars as an early influence. When she was a kid, 'nobody thought (Shooting Stars) was funny. I thought that it was so cool because it was playing with the normal structure of games shows, taking it and just being utterly ridiculous with it. I thought: this is the humour that I want to hone'.

There is also an element of clowning to Jeffries's performance in Jewel, which works very well. Jeffries found clowning accidentally when she was doing her MA course in Physical Theatre at St. Mary's

University College, London. She describes clowning as a real joy that revived her and helped her to identify herself as a performer. 'I have always struggled with ensemble work and how to respond as a group to something and I've always kind of ended up sticking out like a sore thumb. When I discovered clowning I finally found a place for it, which was really nice. It felt like it was OK to not fit in, it didn't mean that you were selfish or egotistical, you were just a certain kind of performer'.

Jeffries performed Jewel at this year's Brighton Fringe Festival, where it was nominated for the One to Watch award, and she is just about to finish performing it at the Edinburgh Fringe. In terms of the future, Jeffries would like to carry on doing solo theatre shows and would also love to make a sketch show for TV. If she does, I for one will be tuning in.

JEWEL WAS ON AT THE FRINGE THIS SUMMER. FOR MORE ON CLAUDIA'S WORK, VISIT JEWELISGONNABEUPSET.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK. FOR MORE OF IMOGEN'S WRITING, HEAD TO MARCUSREPORT.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK.

INTERVIEW – NAKED

Lauren Mayberry catches up with Alex from the band ahead of their September gig for TYCI.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T DISCOVERED YOUR MUSIC YET, WHO ARE NAKED?

Naked are a gang whose member currently number three - Aggie Gryczkowska sings, Grant Campbell plays low guitar, and I play high guitar.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SOUND?

Late night and sleepless.

HOW DID YOU EACH GET INTO MUSIC?

From what I recall we all met on the small Island of Fårö on the south-eastern coast of Sweden where we lived above a radar installation station and were exposed to and developed a supranatural infinity with feed-back hum and static wow and flutter. Our kinship with white noise has infiltrated our skulls and we heard music everywhere, telegraph wires, still kettles, electric sockets. Grant still speaks to his favourite telephone exchange box when he is drunk and homesick. It is green and near the Meadows.

WHAT BANDS / ARTISTS HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR SOUND AND SONGWRITING? WHO WOULD YOU RECOMMEND READERS GO HAVE A LISTEN TO?

Les Rallizes Dénudés, Pan Sonic, Evian Christ, Alva Noto.

WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF BEING A MUSICIAN? AND THE WORST?

The best is the sound. The worst is the static in between.

LIE FOLLOWS LIE CAME OUT ON SONG BY TOAD IN JULY. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE LABEL AND HOW YOU GUYS GOT INVOLVED WITH THEM?

Song by Toad are an Edinburgh label that is most closely associated with a Folk music / singer-songwriter sensibility. This is pretty much the polar opposite of where we were coming from and if the label were a playground we'd be three sullen socially

awkward loners in black and smoking wordlessly and quite joylessly by the railings.

However, we are very fond of sincerity and they are very sincere people when it comes to their love of music. We could've gone with a London label with a sharp name and sharper font but it wouldn't have been as perfect. We want everything to be perfect. Music is your own little world if you don't care to make it perfect then what hope is there?

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO GO FOR A VINYL RELEASE?

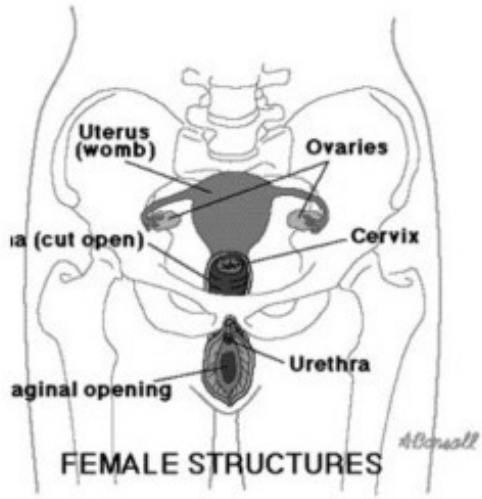
We wanted something real, perfect and pure. We wanted our first breath to be caught and pressed onto a communion wafer.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

Were recorded the second EP and are constructing a replica of our bunker in Fårö. We are playing your club night in September – we are looking forward to that! (LAW played, who we really like. Her and the Young Fathers are our favourite Edina bands.) We have gigs in Dundee and Berlin coming up too.

FOR MORE ON THE BAND, VISIT NAKED-NAKED-NAKED.COM.

Getting Older



Rowan Martin shares some home truths about ageing.

I pity the woman who wrote into the Awl complaining of growing older. Not because she fears for her face, but because we made her that way… For some people, losing their looks brings a freedom to focus on what they are good at. For others, most frequently women, it's like being the victim of a psychological execution…

What are young women fetishised for? Not what they do, but how they look. I don't know of any female web entrepreneurs at all under 25, James Blake has immediately stumbled into more respect than Bjork ever got at his age, and I haven't seen any films about a woman surviving alone in the desert for 4 days. Or a woman surviving anywhere alone for any amount of time which isn't a horror film / features the threat of rape.

Hence the pity. Because there is nothing the ageing woman can do about what she has been gifted with – lines will appear next to her mouth. Bags will appear under her eyes. A permanent wrinkle might place itself between her eyebrows. Her back might hurt, a lot, one day. There will be a crack in her neck. She will not be able to touch her toes. People without wrinkles will explain who a band or a person is, and she will not be able to say, 'yeah, I've heard of her / him', because she decided to watch a box set of something, rather than reading blogs by teenagers and people in their early 20's. Sex will become less important. Getting drunk is overall more challenging. An early night is a treat. Hating on things takes too much effort.

Understanding what youth is supposed to represent and how it's manipulated helps, a bit. Youthful men – I suppose they embody the ideals of strength and stamina. Youthful women – fertility, stamina, naivete / ignorance (attractive in women), flawless face / body. Successful and famous youthful men represent to older men what they might have achieved if they'd tried a little harder or if the cards had fallen a different way; successful and famous youthful women represent physical attributes seen as universally positive to society as a whole. Women are lavished with praise for things they have no control over – their appearance. Men are praised more

frequently for things they engineer, control and create. Hence why ageing, for women, is like being chucked into the sea without a lifejacket. Women are often very aware of what they have achieved and they may have the possessions / promotions / experiences / bank balance to prove it, but it takes effort to dislocate yourself from what everyone else might love about you – how you look.

DO NOT FOCUS ON WHAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE ACHIEVED BY A CERTAIN AGE. IT IS FACT THAT THEY WILL HAVE ACHIEVED LESS THAN YOU IN SOME OTHER AREA. NONE OF THESE YOUNGSTERS KNOW AS MUCH AS YOU DO ABOUT

_____

(INSERT YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE HERE).

Here is how to grow older without going mad:

STOP THINKING ABOUT HOW OLD EVERYONE ELSE IS, FOR A START. DO NOT ASK ANYONE'S AGE OUT OF CURIOSITY. IT DOES NOT MATTER UNLESS YOU MAKE IT MATTER.

UNDERSTAND THAT MILESTONES ARE COMPLETE AND UTTER BULLSHIT. THERE IS NO SPECI C TIME WHEN YOU SHOULD DRIVE, HAVE SOMEWHERE REASONABLY PERMANENT TO LIVE, HAVE A PARTNER. THINK OF SOMEONE WHO HAS ALL THESE THINGS. AND THEN IMAGINE THEM LOSING IT ALL WHEN THEY MAKE SOME SORT OF FUCKED-UP DECISION WHEN THEY ARE 46 (A DESTRUCTIVE AFFAIR AT WORK, FOR EXAMPLE). WHERE DO THEY END UP? BACK WITH MUM AND DAD OR A SIBLING, WITH NO PARTNER AND NO JOB. HAVING NOTHING THAT SOCIETY VALUES CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE AT ANY TIME. HAVING WHAT SOCIETY DOES VALUE IS NEVER PERMANENT. YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU WANT AND YOU WILL KEEP IT FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN BUT YOU MIGHT LOSE IT ALL AGAIN BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES OUT OF YOUR CONTROL...

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SIMILARLY-MINDED PEOPLE. IF YOU THINK YOU'RE ALL A BIT, WELL, SUPERFCIAL, THAT'S OKAY (BECAUSE I'M SURE YOU ALL HAVE FUN TOGETHER SOMEHOW), BUT NOW IT'S YOUR JOB TO START BIGGING UP THE OLDER PEOPLE WHO ACHIEVE THINGS. START TO EXTRICATE YOURSELF FROM BEING OBSESSED WITH LOOKS. LEAD THE WAY INTO MATURITY. SEE THE ABOVE STEPS.

And therein lies the rub. For as long as we fail to recognise what women actually do, or what they are good at, we will never age gracefully. We'll panic. We'll spend thousands on creams. We'll always see young, bent-over women in tabloids and probably in our nightmares. And we will never know what we are really capable of - we will never reach our full potential - until we resolve our addiction to youth.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK.

TYCI LIVE #12

SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER

Live set from gloom-pop trio
SHARPTOOTH

plus a DJ set from
the wonderful BIRDCAGE gals

11pm – 3am
Bloc, 117 Bath Street,
Glasgow

FREE before midnight;
£2 after

Anyone who writes TYCI
on their knuckles
will get in free after
midnight too

TYCI ON SUBCITY RADIO

The latest episode of the TYCI podcast is online now and can be found at soundcloud.com/tyciblog. Our next Subcity show will be Thursday 10 October, 5 – 7pm. Tune in at subcity.org/shows/tyci.

Subcity Radio

TYCI is a collective run by women.
We have a website where we write about things which affect us and put together features on art, theatre, music, film, politics, current affairs and most things in between. We also talk about similar stuff on our monthly radio show on Subcity.

This zine is a collection of some of the content from our site and is distributed in conjunction with our monthly live event at Bloc.

If you would like to get involved, reply to any of our articles or just generally say hi, hit us up on contact.tyci@gmail.com or visit tyci.org.uk.

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